(a) whether to promote the growth of tourism in the country, the Union Government propose to select more tourist spots particularly coastline areas in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government had discussions with the States having coastline to promote tourism spots; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (d) Identification and development of tourist spots is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. The Ministry of Tourism, however, provides financial assistance for tourism projects on the basis of proposals received from them subject to availability of funds and inter-se priority. During the current financial year 106 projects for Rs. 398.33 crore have been sanctioned upto September, 2009 for development and promotion of tourism in the country, including the Coastal States.

Konark temple, Odisha

†1635. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether his ministry is aware that stones are coming off from famous Konark Temple of Odisha on a large scale;

(b) if so, measures adopted by Government to protect it;

(c) whether State Government has drawn the attention of Central Government towards this serious issue; and

(d) whether Government have any plan to reintroduce the practice of regular sun worship by making foolproof arrangements of security of famous and sacred Sun Temple?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) to (c) A high level Technical Committee of Archaeological Survey of India has recently visited the Sun Temple Konark and found that there were no such instances of stones falling. The temple is well protected and conserved.

(d) No, Sir.

Decline of tourists to India

1636. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the number of tourist to India has been reduced substantially in 2008 and 2009 in comparison to 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007, if so, the reasons thereof?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.